



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

STAFF REPORT

April 15, 2010

REQUEST: City Council Bill #10-0456/Planned Unit Development – Designation – Mount Vernon Mill: 2980, 2981, 2990, 3000, 3030, and 3100 Falls Road

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Eric Tiso

PETITIONER(S): Terra Nova Ventures, LLC

OWNER: Picker, LLC, Kramer Brothers Hobbies of Long Island, Inc., and Anthony J. and Faith M. Correlli, under contract of sale to Terra Nova Ventures, LLC.

SITE/ GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: These M-2-2 properties are bordered by I-83 to the southwest, and are mostly on the south side of Falls Road, between Wyman Park Drive on the southeast, and the Falls Road ramp from I-83 (Exit 8) to the northwest. Most of the buildings on this site are from a historic mill operation, and date from the late 19th Century.

General Area: These properties are within the Jones Falls area. Portions of the site are within the flood plain. One of the buildings is located between the Jones Falls and I-83 without direct street access to that portion of the property. The Stone Hill historic community is located immediately to the north, within the Hampden neighborhood.

HISTORY

There have been no previous Planning Commission actions on this property.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

This project is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan's LIVE Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods, Objective 2: Strategically Redevelop Vacant Properties Throughout the City.

ANALYSIS

Background:

This bill will establish an Industrial Planned Unit Development (PUD) for these properties, and will offer a mix of uses that will revitalize this historic mill, and allow for its productive reuse. In addition to M-1 and M-2 uses, the project proposes 87 dwelling units (studios, lofts, one- and two-bedroom apartments) in the main mill building, plus eight condominium units in the Store House building. There will also be office and retail uses in the Mill and Picker buildings, including a potential restaurant. Parking will be provided mostly in the Mill building, with some surface parking. The Correlli Roofing parcel will be cleared for future office or retail development, and will be the only anticipated new construction in this PUD. There is an existing pole-mounted billboard on the Correlli Roofing parcel that will remain in place.

Properties:

- Lot 1, Mill Building: ± 2.190 acres;
 - Lot 1A, Picker Building: ± 0.551 acres;
 - Lot 3, Concrete Building: ± 2.010 acres;
 - Lot 3A, Unimproved: ± 0.639 acres;
 - Lot 4, Correlli Roofing: ± 0.900 acres;
 - Lot 7, Stone House: ± 0.322 acres.
- Total within lots: ± 6.612 acres.
Total area within proposed PUD boundaries: ± 10.1 Acres.

Permitted Land Uses:

Section 3 of the bill lists the land uses that are eligible for this PUD. All uses from the M-1 and M-2 districts are included. Residential uses will be limited to an overall density of 1,500 square feet per dwelling unit – which is equivalent to the density required for multi-family dwellings in the R-6 District, and comparable to the nearest residential zone. Some Office Residential district uses are included (offices, philanthropic and charitable organizations), and specific commercial uses from B-1, B-2 and B-3 districts.

Also included among the allowed uses is a “high quality liquor store” that may be located on the first floor of the building to be built at 3100 Falls Road (the Correlli Roofing site), with certain additional operating restrictions. There will be a maximum of three Class B restaurant alcoholic beverage licenses: two for the properties located at 2980, 3000, and 3030 Falls Road, and one within 3100 Falls Road (the “high quality liquor store” above). These licenses are further required to have at least 50% of their sales in food.

Outdoor table service accessory to a restaurant is allowed, subject to Planning Commission approval. Live entertainment accessory to a restaurant or art gallery is also allowed. The applicants have envisioned that a restaurant could potentially be located in the Boiler Room in the lower level rear of the Mill building. If that occurs, the small plaza terrace could be well suited to an area for outdoor table service.

There are limits to the location of certain uses, in that some of the retail uses may only be located in the basement and first floor levels of any building, as follows: bakery; bicycle stores; candy and ice cream stores; carry-out food stores; greenhouses; tobacco shops; and wearing apparel shops.

Signage:

There is an existing free-standing billboard located on 3100 Falls Road, and will remain. No other billboard or general advertising will be permitted. An existing sign on the roof of the building at 3030 Falls Road will be permitted to remain and may be modified. Signage identifying the property, buildings and tenants is permitted. A comprehensive signage plan will be required to return to the Planning Commission for approval.

Historic Interest:

While these buildings are not located within a historic district, the buildings do have historic value, and will be applying for historic tax credits. The Mill building was built in 1873 and expanded in 1881. The concrete building was built in 1918, and the Picker building was built in 1840.

Parking:

Required parking provisions are outlined in the bill as follows:

Office uses require one parking space per 400 square feet of floor area in excess of 1,000 square feet. Residential uses require one parking space per dwelling unit. Retail uses require one parking space per 300 square feet of floor area in excess of 1,000 square feet. Generally, parking can be included inside the buildings as well as surface parking on the property. Approximately 198 parking spaces will be available throughout the PUD area.

Site Plan Review Committee:

The SPRC has reviewed the preliminary plans for this PUD on March 3, 2010. Further SPRC review of the individual buildings will be required as each is developed, as well as Planning Commission review for Final Design Approval.

Traffic Impact Study:

Baltimore City Ordinance 06-345, requires that the Department of Transportation (“DOT”) determine if a Traffic Impact Study is required for the development projects. The applicant has been advised to meet with the Baltimore Department of Transportation to ascertain the status of its project relative to the traffic impact requirements. All and any required mitigation will be requested by Transportation.

Floodplain:

Portions of the proposed PUD area are within the floodplain, and will have to comply with all applicable program requirements and limitations.

Policy Impacts/Code Analysis:

Planning staff considered a number of factors in recommending approval of this bill:

- Considering the nature of the properties and the size and shape and arrangement of structures, the PUD proposal is reasonable as it will allow for the flexible re-use of these buildings that are otherwise impaired in finding a viable modern industrial tenant.
- Following this redevelopment, traffic patterns in the immediate area should not be negatively impacted. This site is located along Falls Road, which carries a significant amount of traffic at present. There are no immediately adjacent neighbors that would be negatively impacted by any increase in traffic congestion within the immediate area.
- As for adequacy of proposed off-street parking and loading, the property will provide an increase in parking, which should present an overall improvement to what is allowed presently;
- In considering the nature of the surrounding area, this redevelopment is not likely to impair the present or future development of surrounding properties;
- There are no immediately close dwellings, churches, schools, public structures, or other places of public gathering to a majority of the PUD site;
- The site will have to be improved in order to provide adequate accessibility to the premises for fire and police protection (specifically the concrete building on 3030 Falls Road);
- This development will not impact accessibility of light and air to the property and to the property in the vicinity, as nearly all of the PUD properties will maintain their present configuration;
- There are adequate utilities in the immediate area, sufficient access to the existing roadway network; and
- Approval of this PUD will aid in the preservation of these historic buildings that may otherwise be targeted for demolition or neglect. The applicants are also proposing renovation to the historic buildings, and intend to return them to approximately the appearance they had in the 1920s (based on the aerial photos of the site they have obtained that were taken at that time).

Notification:

The following organizations were notified of this action: The Greater Homewood Community Corporation and the Hampden Community Council.

Thomas J. Stosur
Director